



WISEWOMAN

Success Story 2 WISEWOMAN Program Gives South Dakota Women Access to Much-Needed Heart and Diabetes Medications

Barriers Are Removed as Underserved Women Gain Access to Low-Cost or Free Medications

Location South Dakota

Focus Help low-income women get the medications they need for heart disease or diabetes.

Strategy Partners in the community collaborate and use existing pharmacy databases to help underserved women access free and low-cost medications for heart disease and diabetes.

Levels of Success Many organizational accomplishments have been made. By working with partners, WISEWOMAN uses an established system to provide low-cost or free medications to women who most need them. Using a computer-based program gives clinic staff ready access to pharmaceutical programs. This way, women quickly get the medications they need, without having to make another visit to their provider.

Results Hundreds of women could receive access to low-cost or free medications for heart disease and diabetes.

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Web Resources www.emedsample.com
www.state.sd.us/doh/Disease2/index.htm

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Women who have high blood pressure, cholesterol, or glucose are at risk for serious health complications. In South Dakota's WISEWOMAN program, known as *All Women Count!*, more than 700 women have been screened for cardiovascular disease and high glucose levels. Most of the women who qualify for the program do not have insurance, and many of the women who have been screened need prescription medications. WISEWOMAN funds cannot be used to purchase medications. Therefore, the program teamed up with two partners to help women get the medications they need at a low cost or for free.

About Rx Access

The South Dakota Department of Social Services administers Rx Access, a database of pharmaceutical patient assistance programs that offer medications at no or low cost. The database includes enrollment information including income and age requirements for each assistance program. Some assistance programs even provide downloadable applications, making it easier to enroll a patient in the assistance program. After a woman submits information including all medications she currently takes, a pharmacist reviews the medications, makes appropriate substitutions, and generates appropriate applications that are sent to the woman for completion and submission to assistance programs. Once a woman has completed this process, medications are sent to her health care provider for her to pick up. Rx Access also knows when a prescription needs to be renewed and generates applications based on each patient assistance program's process for renewing existing prescriptions. Access to these services is provided at no cost to the women.

About eMedSample

A second way *All Women Count!* ensures that women have access to much-needed medications is through a program called eMedSample, which is administered by MedManage Systems, Inc. As soon as a woman is found to have high blood glucose, she can get immediate help. Currently, insulin produced by one drug company is the only product available. Within this program, physicians register with MedManage Systems, Inc., via www.emedsample.com. They can then print a voucher after filling in the patient's

name, date, strength, and directions for use. Physicians sign the voucher, which the patient can take to any participating pharmacy and receive the medication (currently a vial of insulin) free of charge.

Importance of Success

More at-risk women are getting potentially life-saving medications—on an immediate and long-term basis—through these two programs. By using systems already in place and building on partnerships, *All Women Count!* has eased a barrier for women unable to pay for medications.

In addition, no money was spent to set up or maintain these programs because the programs were already in place. Some providers were already using the programs and most clinic sites had access to the programs. Thus, minimal staff time was *All Women Count!*'s only investment.

Having a convenient system in place that allows providers to gain access through a computer makes it easy to ensure women get the medications they need.

Staff members with varied backgrounds working at different facilities each offer a small contribution that, together, makes a big difference for women in need. Case managers help the women complete the application. Pharmacists with the South Dakota Department of Social Services review medications and access pharmaceutical programs. Medical providers complete the vouchers. Pharmacists check medications and educate women about effective use. This network of providers makes accessing low- or no-cost medications easier for at-risk women.

Lessons Learned

- Use partnerships to create a safety net of providers and services. By partnering with existing programs, you can add valuable, life-saving services at a minimal cost.
- Consider computer-based programs to ensure clinic staff members have easier access to pharmaceutical programs. Providers can get immediate help for women in need during the same visit, reducing the possibility that these women will slip through the cracks.
- Realize the benefits of providing services at the clinics where women routinely receive their care. This ensures their care is individualized and easy to access.